

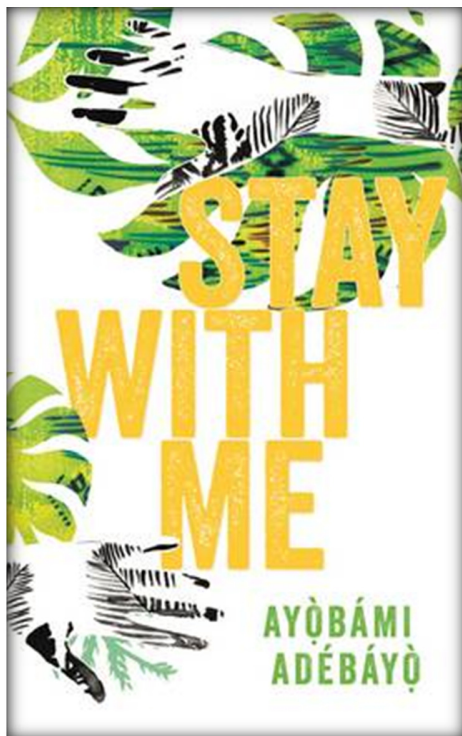


Helping you choose
your next book

CANONIGATE

LoveReading Reader reviews of **Stay With Me** by Ayobami Adebayo

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Katie Hoare

'Stay With Me' is a beautifully written debut set in 1980s Nigeria, based around and written in the voices of Yejide and Akin. The story represents the pressures for the couple, firstly for Yejide, who is the first wife of Akin, who wants the first baby for him, herself and the rest of family. This is made worse by the introduction of another wife. Whilst Akin, who is the eldest son of his family, and of the many wife's his father had, he is expected to produce heirs.

The reader is transported to the 1980s, see and feel what Nigeria was like during this period, as well as hear the two voices from their experiences. You have given the insight into how the church and Nigerian traditions

work hand in hand and how these expectations work in conjunction with the extended family's expectations. You are made to feel how the characters are feeling from the lows and the highs which include the joys of pregnancy.

Jennifer Merville

This book is the story of one woman's struggle to become pregnant. Not only is it the one thing in life that she wants but it will save her marriage and stop her family from constantly bombarding her with questions and ideas about how to become pregnant.

Yejide, the main character longs for a child and after much soul searching and prayer she believes she is pregnant. Yet despite doctor's appointments and scans and the fact that she goes well beyond nine months no one except her believes

she is having a baby. Her husband takes another wife without her knowing and she is expected to take this wife in as part of her family. The book follows the heartbreak any woman may go through when she longs to get pregnant and finds she has difficulty. The careful storyline of the baby dying and then subsequent heartbreaks could be any one's life. But the gut wrenching punch in the stomach when the main character finds out her extended family new of this new wife rips her apart is an added heartbreak in this book.

The author has carefully pieced together a characters life and built the story around it, pulling you in from her home life to her work and social life.

This book has a story to tell.

Marjorie Lacy

I finished this book last night. Wow!! I feel I have been whisked back to Nigeria in the 1980's - the book is so real, I felt that I was the 'fly on the wall'.

It is a beautifully written book, an easy read, but its subject is anything but easy. For a woman, this must be the worst of experiences, the death of any child. Ayobami has handled the story with sensitively. At the same time, she keeps you reading, you must get to the end to see how everything plays out.

A brilliant debut novel, I for one would like her to write more books as good as this one!

Catherine Bryce

A brilliant heart-breaking story of a young couple's love and unending pressure to find happiness whilst trying to live up to family, cultural and society's values.

This wonderful and emotional story is set in Nigeria and tells of a young married couple Yejide and Akin who after three years still remain childless, but are living within a society where childlessness is frowned upon thus putting immense pressure on the couple, especially Yejide. The long hospital investigations, the rise of hope, pressure from family and friends all contribute to the low feelings that she is experiencing. Her mother in law does nothing to help apart from interfering and adding more pressure to Yejide.

However having still had no success of conceiving, Yejide turns to local witch doctors, spiritualists and healers in the hope of becoming pregnant and thus

able to hold her head high in society where a woman's role is defined as a mother. The author writes in a very detailed manner especially with regards to the couple's feelings and emotions, both familial and societal, which in turn describes to the reader the pressures placed upon the couple where there are strong societal norms and values to live up to.

Yejode faces many problems but she is alone, apart from support from her husband Akin and as the reader moves through the book, the problems and pressures faced by the couple begin to become real, as if the couple were real and this gives for a really emotive perspective to the book by the author for the reader which is heart-breaking at times as the reader journeys with the couple.

A truly magnificent story from Ayobami Adebayo sharing with the reader a really descriptive account of the couple, of marriage and motherhood, of loss and grief whilst trying to keep family happy at the couple's emotional expense. A book to cover many genres.

Chloe Hill

This book made me feel so desperate for each of the characters. I loved Yejide and had strong opinions about Akin.

'Stay With Me' is about a woman in Nigeria during the 80s who is desperate to have a child with her husband. She loves him dearly but what she really wants is a child and this is what leads to betrayal and inescapable sadness that leaves her and her husband desperate. Desperation was extremely prominent in 'Stay With Me' and I really felt desperate with the characters. I enjoyed reading it but I didn't cry like I thought I would at the tragic bits. I grew to love Yejide and have strong opinions about Akin but the book didn't work for me. Some parts had beautiful writing and gave real insight into what life would have been like in Nigeria at the time but I thought some of it seemed rushed, especially the ending. I thought that the storyline was good though, and unlike anything I had read before. From the book cover, I expected the book to feel more colourful but there were hardly any descriptions of Nigeria and it did not have the chilled out feel that the cover made me think it would. However, this book did get me more curious about the Nigerian culture and their pounded yam. It made me want to know more about why there was such unrest in Nigeria and why polygamy was to be accepted.

I would give this book 3/5 stars. It just wasn't for me.

Phyllippa Smithson

Oh my, this was a totally addictive read based on relationships, family betrayals, secrets, misunderstandings and an observation of cultural differences.

Switching between the lives of a woman, Yejide, her husband, Akin and the hopes and attempts to have children, set in Nigeria from 1985 to 2008. It opens in 2008 with Yejide preparing to travel to a different part of the country to attend the funeral of her husband's father.

Why she is not with her husband is what is revealed over the course of the book. And what we learn is that Yejide and Akin meet at a political rally and become romantically tied. Akin adores her love of life, her enthusiasm but a lot of what has influenced Yejide is the fact that her Mother had died giving birth to her. The wives that her father had married do not like her, trust her and worked to keep her separate from her step-siblings.

So, she is determined to live her adult life free of the confines of family rivalry. She breaks the mould by getting an education and subsequently running her own business. The one thing however missing from her achievements is the birth of a child. Her extended family, work colleagues and the community at large begin to whisper as to why which draws out her weakness as she struggles to play the doting wife in a world where polygamy is the norm. This is demonstrated when Akin marries Fummi. Immediately Yejide sees this as an outright rejection of herself and a further attack on her childless self.

This is a most remarkably powerful story and to its credit is up there the very best in this genre, 'The Kite Runner'. And along with Khaled Hosseini, Ayobami Adebayo is now an author I will eagerly look forward to reading anything she publishes in the future.

Peter Mynahan

A good and easy to follow book balancing the personal struggles of one woman with the struggles of a nation

The book commences with an account from the view of Yejide

Yejide is clearly an independent woman fighting a dual battle against the people closest to her and also the culture that surrounds her; a culture that implies a disrespect, bordering on contempt, for the female race

Yejide is portrayed as a lady with a troubled past and the book as a whole

balances well her personal struggles with the troubles of a nation, chronicling the turning points in the nation's history

Yejide is portrayed as having contempt for the "second" wife of her husband Akin, in a culture where polygamy appears to be the norm. But this contempt does not appear to be mutual with Fummi regarding Yejide as a superior being
The book is an easy read and the events therein are easy to follow.

Tina Tse

Extremely entertaining and thought-provoking debut. I eagerly await Ayobami Adebayo's next work!

The novel is set in 1980s Nigeria and the main protagonist, Yehide, is under pressure from her in-laws to have a child.

When, after several years of marriage, one does not materialise, her in-laws force her husband, Akin, to take a new wife to continue the family line. This single decision has devastating consequences for everyone.

Just like a Greek tragedy, it seems that, through a series of decisions, Yejide and Akin are predestined to follow their fate. We, as readers, can only shout helplessly from the sideline, in the full knowledge that our protests will ultimately fall on deaf ears.

The novel does not flinch away from exploring the harsher realities of love in all its manifestations, from that between a couple to fraternal and maternal love. We are forced to examine what it means to love and the impact this love has. Only occasionally are we allowed to glimpse at the sweeter version of love.

I am not surprised Ayobami Adebayo was highly commended in the Commonwealth short story competition: There was suspense and a number of unexpected twists that demanded my full engagement. These, combined with the clear and simple language meant I finished the book in one sitting.

Victoria Halliday

An unputdownable novel about the lengths a husband will go to in order to give his wife what she wants - and the unexpected results of doing so.

'Stay With Me', by Ayobami Adebayo, is a novel about a family. Set in Nigeria in the 1980s, the novel is told from the viewpoints of both a husband and a wife

and the difficulties they face with starting a family. This is a really touching novel about the lengths a husband will go to, in order to give his wife what she wants - and the impact that doing so will have on a family. This a really engaging novel with vivid character voices and difficult to put down. Highly recommended!

Dana Captainino

The novel is mainly set in the turbulent political upheaval of Nigeria in the 1980s complementing the emotional turmoil encountered by the families.

In the week that my friend the acclaimed Nigerian novelist Buchi Emecheta died it is fitting to be reading a novel by this promising new Nigerian writer Ayobami Adebayo.

'Stay With Me' oozes the sometimes brutal realities of everyday life and traditions in Nigeria. With the emphasis on the complexities and often shocking oppression of a family life ruled by strong women embroiled in superstition and tyranny. These family relationships are explored on every level and the desperate quest for children and their subsequent loss by the central characters Yejide and Akin is embarked upon with heart breaking rawness. The novel is mainly set in the turbulent political upheaval of Nigeria in the 1980s complementing the emotional turmoil encountered by the families.

This is not a happy read on the whole but it is an enlightening one as the reader sinks deeper into a culture and environment that for many readers in the UK is virtually unknown. And maybe just maybe there is a glimpse of light at the end.

I hope that we will be reading a lot more from Ayobami Adebayo in the future.

Cathy Small

Did you ever want a baby so much that you would do anything to have one? Akin & Yejide were a married couple with pressure from everyone to have a family but the truths were not yet known!

Akin & Yejide had been married for too long for them not to have a baby according to their family and friends. They both have their own plans to try any route or medicine to be successful but it remains a secret. Finally a baby arrives but we then are taken through the elation of this but this quickly becomes grief as their first child passes away. Life continues but we see the cracks in their

marriage as the truths start to be shared with each other and it is likely that they cannot come back from these. Ayobami takes us through the emotions from both Akin's and Yejide's point of view as they struggle in the joys and grieves from life. **Very touching but heart felt story.**

Lisa Wise

'Stay With Me' is beautifully written and gives an insight to the Nigerian culture. Particularly the hierarchy within the family & the importance of having children.

The book is written from the view of Yejide who is hoping for a miracle baby & Akin her husband. Each chapter alternates between Akins story & Yejide's.

This is a bittersweet story which as a mother myself was very poignant, it depicts the love of a mother for her child perfectly. It also shows

There are lots of twists and turns involved in the story and all is not as it seems.

A fantastic debut novel.

Julie Watkin

This story is a joy to read and be part of. Full of heartache, enduring love and desperation that will bring you to tears.

This story came as a real surprise to me. It had me hooked with the first few chapters. I felt transported to another world full of tradition and strong family values. The impact these have on Yejide prove almost too much for her to bear as she deals with the struggle to conceive a child as expected of her. The man who has loved and protected her has also fallen foul of the family's expectations and his own demons. This is a tale of twists and heartache and full of passion and love set on the backdrop of the societal pressures of Nigeria in the 80's. I defy anyone not to feel a roller coaster of emotions as they read this.

Karen Swanscott

Powerful subjects woven into a rich cultural background. A story of marriage and loss told from the dual perspectives of husband and wife as their marriage and world collapses.

'Stay With Me' covers some powerful subjects and is woven into an amazing cultural background. Yet the story is a light, quick read. The story flows well but does not reach an emotional depth with the characters that when reading you always seem to be waiting for. Telling the story of Yejide and Akin's marriage through two different perspectives helps keep the interest in the story. However I found it hard to fully connect with either of the characters. Yejide seemed to never be completely likeable or relatable too and Akin seemed remote to both his wife and the readers. The cultural aspect of the story however was a rich tapestry of cultural practices and beliefs that was fascinating and lifted the novel. Whilst lacking in emotional depth the novel is worth reading and I will look out for more of Ayobami Adebayo's work.

Carrie Jones

Tragedy, heartbreak, the pain of loss- it doesn't matter if the story is set in Nigeria or Northampton, the issues that Ayobami tackles so sensitively resonate regardless of location.

It does not matter whether the story is set in Nigeria or Northampton, the issues that Ayobami tackles so sensitively in her novel are the same.

Tragedy, heartbreak, the pain of loss both in relationships and through death; all are described with anguished accuracy. I found the final few chapters extremely moving.

When I started this book I knew little about Nigeria, and certainly not the role of women in the society. I found it shocking that this story is set partly in the 80s, and couldn't help but compare the differences between my life and Yejide's, and yet she was considered to be in a modern and successful relationship with Akin- with the exception of her failure to have a child.

The story is told by both Yejide and Akin, but I did find that it was not always clear from the first few sentences which one was speaking, until I recognised the 'voice'.

This technique works well overall, particularly in Akin's case, where some of his decisions may be hard to understand when described by Yejide, it allows him an opportunity to explain that maybe he was foolish and did what he did through love .

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and look forward to reading more of Ayobami's work

www.boozybookworm.com

You can follow Carrie on Twitter: @boozy_bookworm

Taflyn Pearson

The author expresses her characters' emotions very succinctly and certainly conveys the atmosphere of 80's Nigeria. However, neither the emotions nor the state of the country are particularly pretty!

The chapters jumped around from times and perspectives which was a bit confusing. It was a well-written book, but not an enjoyable one to read in my opinion. If you like your emotions raw and lifelike then this may be the book for you, but for me it was too real - I far prefer my books to have happy endings and be more 'fun' to read. This is just my opinion and my personal choice - I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who likes a gritty emotional read. But be prepared - even the ending (which some would say IS a happy ending!!) doesn't answer all the questions you'll want asking.